



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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District of Arizona*

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GILBERT MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO THEFT OF GOVERNMENT FUNDS

PHOENIX –The former president of an international export firm has admitted to bilking a federal agency of more than \$600,000. Robert Lamoine Gunnell, 40, of Gilbert, entered a plea of guilty on April 5th to Theft of Government Property.

Gunnell was President of International Export Management, Inc., which operated through offices in Tucson and Gilbert. Gunnell's company participated in an United States Department of Agriculture program which reimbursed companies for 50% of the expenses they incurred for foreign advertising and promotion of American food and agricultural products.

Gunnell admitted in United States District Court that in 2001 he knowingly submitted fraudulent invoices in support of his claims for reimbursement in promoting his products, Dairy Gold Milk and Athlete's Choice Sport Drink, in Mexico. As part of his plea agreement, Gunnell specifically admitted receiving one check for \$32,600, but agreed that the total amount of restitution due the Commodity Credit Corporation, a federal agency, is \$608,707.56.

A conviction for Theft of Government Property carries a maximum penalty of ten years, a \$250,000 fine or both. Sentencing will be held before United States District Judge Roslyn O. Silver on June 19, 2006.

The investigation was conducted by Special Agent Tara Davis of the Office of the Inspector General of the United States Department of Agriculture.. The prosecution is being handled by Richard I. Mesh and Frank T. Galati, Assistant U.S. Attorneys, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

CASE NUMBER: CR-05-1294 PHX-ROS
RELEASE NUMBER: 2995-046(Gunnell)

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